



COUNTY OF HYDE

30 Oyster Creek Road
PO Box 188
SWAN QUARTER, NORTH CAROLINA 27885
www.hydecourtnc.gov
252-926-4400

Hyde County, NC

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CONTACT: Donnie Shumate, Public Information Officer
252-542-0842, dshumate@hydecourtnc.gov

School Bus Safety: Does your child know the rules? Sheriff encourages safety measures to avoid injury

Every day millions of students use school buses as transportation to and from school. Although school buses represent the safest form of highway transportation, there are a number of safety factors of which both student and drivers should be aware. Hoping to ensure school bus safety, Sheriff Cahoon of Hyde County encourages caution whenever school buses are present.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in recent years there were an average of 131 fatalities in school transportation-related traffic crashes each year and more school-aged pedestrians have been killed during the hours of 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. than any other time of day.

"Children are often eager to get off the school bus because they are excited to tell their parents about all of the fun they had at school that day," said Sheriff Cahoon.

"It is crucial that parents re-enforce the school bus safety rules children learn at school." Sheriff Cahoon also suggests that parents drive their child's bus route with them to practice the proper safety precautions they can take to help ensure their child enjoys a safe ride to and from school.

Sheriff Cahoon encourages all parents to discuss the following safety measures with their children:

Students

- Always arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes early.
- While the bus is approaching make sure to stand at least three giant steps away from the curb, wait until the bus has come to a complete stop, the door opens, and the bus driver says that it's OK to board.

- Always walk on the sidewalk when preparing to cross the street near a bus. Make eye contact with the driver so that you are sure he or she sees you.
- Never walk behind the bus.
- If you are walking beside the bus, walk at least three giant steps away.
- Use the handrail when entering and exiting the bus. Take extra precautions to make sure that clothing with drawstrings and book bags do not get caught in the hand rail or door.
- Never stop to pick something up that you have dropped when a bus is stopped. Tell the bus driver or wait until the bus has driven off to avoid not being seen by the driver.

Motorists

- Remember that children are unpredictable in their actions. Take extreme caution when traveling in a school zone.
- If there are no sidewalks, drive cautiously. Be more alert to the possibility of children walking in the road.
- Slow down and prepare to stop whenever you see yellow school bus lights flashing.
- Never pass a school bus when there are flashing red lights and the stop arm is extended. This is a sign that children are getting on or off the bus. Motorists must wait until the red lights stop flashing, the stop arm is withdrawn, and the bus is moving before they can start driving again.
- Learn and obey the school bus laws in North Carolina.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

For more information contact the Hyde County Sheriffs Office at 252-926-3171.